

my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Sheryl Soundar attends Manvel High School in Manvel, Texas. The essay topic is: select an important event that has occurred in the past 15 years and explain how that event has changed our country.

When asked for the most important event in our country's history within the past fifteen years, most people will say September 11, and not without good reason. That day launched the United States into a war that still demands American soldiers. It cost many lives, changed an entire country's outlook on foreign affairs, and put a standstill on many domestic issues. However, another event that is often forgotten in the glaring spotlight of 9/11 is Hurricane Katrina.

Personally, I have many memories of Katrina and the damage that it did to New Orleans, having lived in Houston during that time. This story occupied an entire month of evening news broadcasts and cemented into my memory the struggles that the people of New Orleans faced. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) also faced a struggle, but of a different sort. FEMA came under extreme criticism for its inability to offer assistance and for the prolonged lack of access to resources that caused in the New Orleans area. The public relations fiasco that resulted tarnished not only FEMA's reputation, but also the reputation of the already heavily criticized Bush administration. Many active duty troops were deployed to the area to assist during the recovery period in light of FEMA's failing.

As a whole, the Gulf Coast region was deeply affected by Hurricane Katrina, physically as well as mentally. New Orleans faced harsh economic conditions and harsh odds as its people began to rebuild, and surrounding states also felt this burden. However, the greatest impact Katrina had on the United States was on our collective psyche. At first, it seemed like another problem stacked on top of the ever present war on terror, but as the worst pain subsided, the country realized that this was, more than it was a tarnish or a natural disaster, an opportunity. Americans from coast to coast were horrified by the state of affairs in New Orleans and poured out their sympathy for those in need. As a nation, we were saddened and strengthened by Katrina, finding fear in the condition of the Gulf Coast and solace in the ability of Americans to unite behind a common goal.

ALICIA BALDERAS

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Alicia Balderas for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Alicia Balderas is an 11th grader at Pomona High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Alicia Balderas is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Alicia Balderas for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

CONGRATULATING THE DEDICATED HOOSIERS OF KEM KREST CORPORATION

HON. JACKIE WALORSKI

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the dedicated Hoosiers of Kem Krest Corporation headquartered in Elkhart, Indiana.

They have recently been named the General Motors 2014 Supplier of the Year.

Kem Krest started in 1979 and since then has grown and expanded their customer base beyond the automotive industry to include the agriculture and defense industries.

The exceptional quality of products from this supplier reflects the hard work of their Hoosier employees.

They have demonstrated a clear commitment to go above and beyond as well as take the utmost pride in the products they supply.

I would like to personally thank the Hoosiers of Kem Krest Corporation for their hard work and dedication.

Kem Krest Corporation serves as another great example of a successful business in Northern Indiana and their devotion to making quality products should be recognized.

The dedication Kem Krest has shown makes me proud to represent Indiana's Second Congressional District.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on March 23 and 24, I missed a series of Roll Call votes. Had I been present, I would have voted "YEA" on #130, 131, 132, 133, and 134. I would have voted "NAY" on #135.

A TRIBUTE TO JOEL FORTNEY

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Joel Fortney for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Joel has the determination and drive to be successful in all that he does, and his exemplary work with Principal Global Investors is a testament to that. Now the portfolio manager of Principal Mid-Cap Value Fund, Joel's success has continued. Joel and his wife are active in their community too, where they support the Blank Park Zoo by sponsoring animals. In all aspects of his life Joel's example of hard work and service makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Joel in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Joel on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

TRIBUTE TO RIDA SARWAR

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Rida Sarwar attends Pearland High School in Pearland, Texas. The essay topic is: In your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

239 years ago, the thirteen colonies declared independence from Great Britain. Since then, the United States government has always played a large role in the lives of Americans throughout history. The role of the government plays a huge part in society. The government should always cater to the needs of its citizens and provide an organized society.

In 1776, America declared its complete autonomy from Great Britain by signing the Declaration of Independence. Fifty-six men signed the document that would later become the most important document in American history and a symbol of independence. These men signed the declaration for many reasons. The most well-known reason was because of the absence of representation